

ETHICAL EDUCATION IN MOZAMBIQUE: BETWEEN NORMATIVE DISCOURSES AND THE CHALLENGES OF PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE IN BASIC SCHOOLING

EDUCAÇÃO ÉTICA EM MOÇAMBIQUE: ENTRE OS DISCURSOS NORMATIVOS E OS DESAFIOS DA PRÁTICA PEDAGÓGICA NO ENSINO BÁSICO

EDUCACIÓN ÉTICA EN MOZAMBIQUE: ENTRE LOS DISCURSOS NORMATIVOS Y LOS DESAFÍOS DE LA PRÁCTICA PEDAGÓGICA EN LA EDUCACIÓN BÁSICA



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ABSTRACT

Ethical education in primary and secondary schooling is a fundamental pillar for building just and democratic societies. This study is justified by the need to understand how ethics is conceived and applied within the Mozambican educational system, in dialogue with experiences from the Portuguese-Speaking African Countries (PALOP). Its objective is To analyze the convergences and divergences between the normative guidelines of ethical education and their effective pedagogical implementation in primary education in Mozambique. To this end, a bibliographic-documentary investigation was conducted, complemented by qualitative content analysis in academic databases and institutional repositories. The results show that, although national legislation and policies recognize ethics as a central component of integral education, significant challenges remain, such as curricular fragmentation, insufficient teacher preparation, and a lack of contextualized methodologies. Thus, it is observed that transversal integration of ethics into political-pedagogical projects, strengthening continuous teacher training, and the use of contextualized pedagogical practices such as dramatizations, palaver, and community projects, emerge as promising pathways. It is concluded that this work provides a critical synthesis and practical recommendations for educational policies and school practices that foster the effective experience of values in Mozambican schools (Guimarães, 2005).

Keywords: Ethics. Educational Policies. Teacher Training. Basic Education. Mozambique.

RESUMO

A formação ética na educação básica e média constitui um pilar essencial para sociedades justas e democráticas. Este estudo se justifica pela necessidade de compreender como a ética é concebida e aplicada no sistema educativo moçambicano, em diálogo com experiências dos Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa (PALOP). Tem como objetivo analisar as convergências e distanciamentos entre as diretrizes normativas da educação ética e a sua efetiva implementação pedagógica no ensino básico em Moçambique. Para tanto, procede-se a uma investigação bibliográfica-documental,

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complementada por análise qualitativa de conteúdo em bases académicas e repositórios institucionais. Os resultados evidenciam que, embora a legislação e as políticas nacionais reconheçam a ética como componente central da formação integral, persistem desafios significativos, como a fragmentação curricular, a insuficiente preparação docente e a escassez de metodologias contextualizadas. Desse modo, observa-se que a integração transversal da ética nos projetos político-pedagógicos, o fortalecimento da formação contínua de professores e o uso de práticas pedagógicas contextualizadas como dramatizações, palaver e projetos comunitários, se apresentam como caminhos promissores para a formação ética. Conclui-se que este trabalho oferece uma síntese crítica e recomendações práticas para políticas e práticas escolares que promovam a vivência efetiva de valores no espaço escolar moçambicano.

Palavras-chave: Ética. Educação Básica. Formação Docente. Políticas Educativas. Moçambique.

RESUMEN

La formación ética en la educación básica y media constituye un pilar esencial para sociedades justas y democráticas. Este estudio se justifica por la necesidad de comprender cómo la ética es concebida y aplicada en el sistema educativo mozambiqueño, en diálogo con experiencias de los Países Africanos de Lengua Oficial Portuguesa (PALOP). Tiene como objetivo Analizar las convergencias y distanciamientos entre las directrices normativas de la educación ética y su efectiva implementación pedagógica en la enseñanza básica en Mozambique. Para ello, se procede a una investigación bibliográfica-documental, complementada con análisis cualitativo de contenido en bases académicas y repositorios institucionales. Los resultados muestran que, aunque la legislación y las políticas nacionales reconocen la ética como componente central de la formación integral, persisten desafíos significativos, como la fragmentación curricular, la insuficiente preparación docente y la escasez de metodologías contextualizadas. De este modo, se observa que la integración transversal de la ética en los proyectos político-pedagógicos, el fortalecimiento de la formación continua de los docentes y el uso de prácticas pedagógicas contextualizadas como dramatizaciones, palaver y proyectos comunitarios se presentan como caminos prometedores. Se concluye que este trabajo ofrece una síntesis crítica y recomendaciones prácticas para políticas y prácticas escolares que promuevan la vivencia efectiva de valores en el espacio escolar mozambiqueño.

Palabras clave: Ética. Políticas Educativas. Formación Docente. Educación Básica. Mozambique.

1 INTRODUCTION

Ethical training in basic education in Mozambique is recognized in public educational policies as an essential component of integral education and the construction of democratic citizenship. More than the transmission of rules of conduct, ethics must be understood as a formative process that promotes critical awareness, social responsibility, and commitment to the common good.

In this context, normative and strategic instruments, such as the National Education System Law (Mozambique, 2018) and the Education Policy and Strategy 2020–2029 (Mozambique, 2020), define ethics as the structuring axis of integral education. However, the specialized literature points out that the effectiveness of this principle in the school routine remains limited by institutional and pedagogical weaknesses, which requires critical and in-depth analysis.

In view of this problem, the following research question arises: How is ethics education conceived in normative discourses and implemented in the pedagogical practices of basic education in Mozambique? Based on this problem, the objective of the research is to analyze the convergences and distances between the normative guidelines of ethics education and its effective pedagogical implementation in basic education in Mozambique.

The justification for this study lies in the need to understand the limits and possibilities of ethical education in an educational system marked by tensions between official policies and school practices. Authors such as Vieira & Menezes (2016), Cardoso, Silva & Jesus (2020), Bozzo (2023) and Bianchessi (2020) reinforce ethics as a living and contextual practice, differentiating it from normative and prescriptive morality. In the Mozambican context, studies by Papel (2020), Tovela (2021) and the report by MINEDH – Ministry of Education and Human Development (Mozambique, 2022) highlight the distance between normative discourse and school practice, pointing out weaknesses in teacher training and curricular operationalization. From an international perspective, documents from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2016) and the *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime* (UNODC, 2021) advocate participatory methodologies and universal values such as justice, cooperation and global citizenship.

From a methodological point of view, this study is inspired by Silva (2015) and Severino (2013), who defend the relevance of the bibliographic and documentary approach, aiming to understand formative processes and social practices in their relational density. This critical perspective allows us to capture nuances that escape quantitative methods, favoring the construction of analytical categories and conceptual deepening.

This article is organized into four parts: the introduction presents the contextualization, the research question and the relevance of the study; the theoretical foundation discusses the main references on school ethics and intercultural epistemologies; the methodology describes the procedures of documentary and bibliographic analysis; and the analysis and discussion section articulates the findings with the theoretical and normative frameworks. The final considerations summarize the results and propose ways to strengthen ethical training in Mozambican basic education.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ethics, conceived as a reflective and relational practice, constitutes an essential foundation for education and for the consolidation of democratic societies, being differentiated from morality by its critical and transformative character. While authors such as Lima (2025) and Vieira & Menezes (2016) highlight ethics as a principle of coexistence and morality as a formative process of participation and autonomy, others such as Cardoso, Silva & Jesus (2020) and Bozzo (2023) reinforce its contextual and living dimension, promoting social awareness and collective responsibility. In contrast, Bianchessi (2020) observes morality as a system of inherited and prescriptive, often uncritical, rules. In the Mozambican context, studies by Papel (2020) and Tovela (2021) highlight the distance between normative discourse and school practice, pointing to the need for methodologies that articulate universal values and local cultural references.

The MINEDH report (Mozambique, 2022) confirms weaknesses in curricular operationalization, while international documents from UNESCO (2016) and UNODC (2021) defend participatory methodologies and universal values such as justice, cooperation, and global citizenship. In summary, the literature converges in stating that ethics education must overcome authoritarian and transmissive approaches, promoting situated, critical and participatory practices capable of responding to social, cultural and global challenges.

2.1 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ETHICS AND MORALS

Ethics, conceived as a reflexive, relational and guiding practice of human actions, is an essential foundation for education and for the consolidation of democratic societies. Contemporary literature distinguishes ethics and morality as complementary, though not identical, dimensions. In this sense, Lima (2025) argues that ethics corresponds to principles that guide human coexistence, developing through dialogue, critical reflection, and community life.

In a convergent way, Vieira & Menezes (2016) add that moral education should be understood as a formative process that involves participation, criticism and autonomy, highlighting the role of the school in the construction of values capable of questioning unjust norms. In the same direction, Cardoso, Silva & Jesus (2020) and Bozzo (2023) underline that ethics is a living, contextual and transformative practice, promoting social awareness and collective responsibility. In contrast, Bianchessi (2020) observes that morality is configured as a system of rules culturally constructed and often inherited uncritically, distinguishing itself from ethics by its prescriptive character.

The literature also emphasizes that ethics and morals interact in the formation of personality, and should be stimulated from childhood through educational processes that favor fair coexistence, critical reflection and dialogue. This perspective is reinforced by Mussaque (2018), who defends ethics as a practice articulated with citizenship and community traditions, and by Pacho & Zimbico (2022), who attribute to the teacher the role of ethical mediator and moral reference in educational practices.

In this debate, Papel (2020) analyzes the educational dynamics in Mozambique from concrete school practices. The author shows that, although official documents proclaim ethics as the structuring axis of integral education, in practice it tends to be reduced to normative and transmissive contents, with no space for critical dialogue and student participation. This finding reinforces the need for methodologies that promote autonomy, reflection and practical experience of ethical values, preventing discipline from being limited to the memorization of rules.

In addition, Tovela (2021) argues that ethics education should be conceived as a dynamic and contextual process, capable of articulating universal values with local cultural references. For the author, the Mozambican school faces the challenge of reconciling community traditions, marked by solidarity and reciprocity, with contemporary demands of democratic and global citizenship. This perspective suggests that school ethics cannot be understood only as the transmission of norms, but as a situated practice, which values local knowledge and promotes the construction of critical and participatory identities.

The Curriculum Implementation Monitoring Report (Mozambique, 2022) adds empirical evidence to the debate, showing that, although ethics is recognized as a transversal axis in curricula, its operationalization remains fragile. The document points out gaps in the definition of institutional responsibilities, insufficient pedagogical resources and the absence of consistent methodologies, confirming that the distance between normative discourse and school practice continues to be one of the greatest challenges of Mozambican education.

From an international perspective, the UNODC handbook (2021) reinforces the relevance of participatory methodologies and universal values such as honesty, justice and cooperation. By proposing pedagogical strategies such as moral dilemmas, dramatizations and community projects, the document shows that school ethics must be lived as a daily practice, aimed at global citizenship, integrity and a culture of peace. This perspective broadens the debate by connecting Mozambique's local challenges with international agendas, showing that building a transformative school ethic requires both institutional coherence and alignment with universal principles of justice and social responsibility.

Thus, both Papel (2020) and Tovela (2021), in dialogue with MINEDH (Mozambique, 2022) and UNODC (2021), converge in pointing out that ethics education in Mozambique requires coherence between discourse and practice, as well as methodologies that favor the active participation of students. Their contributions broaden the debate on the need to overcome authoritarian and normative approaches, proposing a school ethic that is lived in the daily life of the educational community and that responds to the social, cultural and global challenges of the country.

2.2 ETHICS IN THE MOZAMBICAN SCHOOL CONTEXT

In the Mozambican context, the presence of ethics in school is supported by the main regulatory documents of the educational system. The National Education System Law (Mozambique, 2018) and the Education Policy and Strategy 2020-2029 (Mozambique, 2020) recognize ethics as a structuring axis of integral education and democratic citizenship, proposing participatory methodologies, intercultural dialogue and valuing diversity.

However, several recent studies show discrepancies between the proclaimed values and the reality of school practices. Papel (2020) observes that the discipline of Moral and Civic Education is often treated in a marginal way, with reduced didactic time and transmissive approaches that are poorly aligned with students' experiences. Insufficient teacher training, curricular rigidity, and the absence of contextualized methodologies reinforce this discrepancy (Mozambique, 2022; Bianchessi, 2020).

The specialized literature also reveals tensions between normative discourses and institutional practices. Bozzo (2023) identifies pedagogical practices marked by symbolic violence and authoritarianism, which contradict the ideals of democratic coexistence present in official documents. In this sense, school ethics depends not only on discursive policies, but on the coherence between proclaimed values and lived practices. Lima (2025) and Santos (2025) reinforce this idea by stating that ethics only materializes when incorporated into school culture and democratic management.

Comparative experiences in the PALOP offer relevant contributions. In Angola, Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe, pedagogical practices have been developed that integrate traditional narratives, proverbs, dramatizations, moral dilemmas and community projects as resources for teaching ethics (Mussaue, 2018; Vieira & Menezes, 2016). In the same direction, Tovela (2021), inspired by Morin's complex thinking, proposes interdisciplinary projects that articulate community values with contemporary challenges, overcoming curricular fragmentation.

International organizations such as UNESCO (2016) and UNODC (2021) reinforce the relevance of participatory methodologies and universal values such as honesty, justice, and cooperation, advocating ethical education aimed at global citizenship, peace, and sustainability.

We also add the contribution of Cardoso, Silva & Jesus (2020), who underline the importance of ethics as a community practice and as an element of social cohesion. The authors argue that, in African contexts marked by cultural diversity and social inequalities, school ethics should be built from community values and local practices, avoiding the imposition of decontextualized external models. This perspective, coming from Angola, reinforces the debate in the PALOP and broadens the understanding of ethics as a situated, relational and transformative practice.

Despite these advances, structural challenges persist in Mozambique that condition the effectiveness of ethics education. Initial teacher training remains insufficient for a critical approach to ethical content; the curricula have a normative orientation, but lack operationalization; and institutional culture sometimes reproduces authoritarian practices that weaken ethical experience (Barros & Choti, 2020; Papel, 2020). In addition, Pacho & Zimbico (2022) underline the impact of globalized modernity on the erosion of traditional ethical-cultural references, pointing out the need for an intercultural ethic that reconciles local knowledge and universal values.

The review of the contemporary literature shows that, although there is theoretical consensus on the centrality of ethics in integral education, the Mozambican educational reality still expresses tensions between normative discourse and school practice. This finding reinforces the relevance of this study, which seeks to critically understand the place of ethics in basic education and identify ways to strengthen it in the context of educational policies and practices.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach, exploratory and descriptive in nature, aimed at a deep understanding of the meanings, challenges and practices related to ethics education in Mozambican schools. The methodological choice is justified by the complexity of the educational contexts, which involve political, pedagogical, cultural and institutional dimensions.

According to Silva (2015) and Severino (2013), qualitative research is adequate to capture formative processes and social practices in their relational density. The critical perspective is inspired by Siena et al. (2024), who conceive educational processes as socially situated practices, requiring reflective and interpretative analysis. This approach allows capturing nuances that escape quantitative methods, as Creswell (2010) and Bueno (2018) argue.

The investigation combined documentary analysis and bibliographic research, both conducted in a systematic and transparent manner. The documentary analysis consisted of the interpretation of legal and normative provisions, such as Law No. 18/2018 (Mozambique, 2018), the curricula of Basic Education and institutional documents of MINEDH (Mozambique, 2020), with the aim of identifying legal foundations and political guidelines on ethics education in Mozambique. The review protocol began with the identification of 184 documents, including laws, plans, curriculum guides, reports and academic articles, located in databases such as SciELO, Google Scholar, Redalyc, INDE, MINEDH and university repositories. Inclusion criteria were established, such as direct relevance to ethics education, relationship with basic education, connection to the Mozambican context or the PALOP and publications between 2009 and 2025.

The exclusion criteria covered duplicate documents, opinion pieces or outdated ones. After screening, 33 final documents were selected, characterized by author, year, type of publication, context of application and main contributions. The bibliographic research complemented this process, guided by the theoretical references that support the critical approach, following stages of search, screening, full reading and synthesis, with inclusion and exclusion decisions justified according to the theoretical and methodological relevance.

The content analysis followed the model proposed by Bardin (2016), operationalized in four stages: pre-analysis, with floating reading and organization of the corpus; coding, carried out manually, with full reading and thematic marking, resulting in 23 initial codes; categorization, which grouped the codes into three central categories, legal foundations, pedagogical practices, and institutional challenges; and interpretation, which articulated the

empirical data with the theoretical references. To ensure validity, the categories were cross-reviewed by two researchers, reducing biases and increasing interpretative consistency.

All steps were documented in analysis protocols, ensuring traceability of methodological decisions. The triangulation between documentary analysis and literature search reinforced the reliability of the results, allowing a more robust understanding of ethics education in Mozambique.

The research respected ethical principles of academic integrity, methodological transparency, and responsible use of sources, in line with the reflections of Diniz and Guerreiro (2015), which emphasize the social responsibility of research, and with the ANPEd guidelines (2024), which reinforce scientific integrity in research in education. There was no direct involvement of human participants, which minimized ethical risks, and the treatment of the information followed scientific rigor and respect for citation and authorship standards. The database analysis followed treatment and interpretation methodologies proposed by Zanetti Neto (2020), which highlight the importance of systematization, coding, and categorization of data to ensure consistency and validity of the results.

Among the limitations of the study, we highlight the dependence on documents available in digital and institutional databases, the absence of empirical data collected directly in schools, and the possibility of interpretative biases, mitigated through triangulation and cross-review. Thus, the methodology adopted ensures replicability, reliability, and a solid basis for the interpretation and generalization of the findings.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The documentary and bibliographic analysis allowed the identification of three central categories related to the understanding and implementation of ethics education in Mozambican basic education. The results presented reflect exclusively the elements emerging from the normative documents, curricula, legislation and specialized literature that constituted the corpus of this study.

4.1 ETHICS IN THE MOZAMBIKAN CONTEXT

In Mozambique, ethics occupies a central position in normative discourses, but its effectiveness in pedagogical practice continues to face structural and methodological obstacles. Although official documents proclaim values such as respect, solidarity and democratic coexistence, the absence of specific methodological guidelines weakens their implementation.

This distance between discourse and practice confirms the criticism of Papel (2020), who identifies the marginalization of the discipline of Moral and Civic Education, and converges with Barros & Choti (2020), when he highlights that insufficient teacher training and the lack of methodological innovation compromise ethical experience in schools. From the curricular point of view, the values appear in a generic way, without definition of observable competencies, which limits their operationalization.

We perceive incoherence between institutional discourses and the real conditions of functioning of schools, already denounced by Mussaque (2018), remains current, and the absence of continuous training strategies compromises the construction of ethical skills, as highlighted by UNESCO (2016). In school practices, a transmissive approach predominates, little articulated with the students' daily lives, which reinforces the decontextualization of ethics and its reduction to normative contents. Despite these weaknesses, promising prospects emerge.

Vieira & Menezes (2016) suggest participatory methodologies, such as debates and dramatizations, that align with the needs identified in the Mozambican context. Tovela (2021), dialoguing with Morin's complex thinking, emphasizes interdisciplinary and collaborative practices that stimulate students' protagonism. Bozzo (2023) reinforces the importance of understanding educational processes as socially situated practices, highlighting that school ethics only becomes effective when articulated with community and cultural experiences.

4.2 EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN THE PALOP COUNTRIES

The challenges facing Mozambique are not isolated. In Angola, ethics is linked to citizenship programs, but curricular centralization and scarcity of resources make it difficult to operationalize them (Cardoso, Silva & Jesus, 2020). Insufficient teacher training and the absence of clear methodologies limit the ability of schools to translate proclaimed values into consistent practices, bringing the Angolan context closer to Mozambican weaknesses.

In Cape Verde, on the other hand, there is a greater appreciation of community practices and local knowledge. Silva & Fernandes (2018) highlight the use of traditional narratives, proverbs and cultural projects as pedagogical tools of ethical transmission. This approach shows that school ethics is not limited to normative content, but emerges as a living practice, rooted in local knowledge and community participation.

The connection with Mozambique is clear: valuing cultural and community practices can be a way to overcome curricular fragmentation and methodological rigidity. In São Tomé and Príncipe, institutional fragility and the absence of consistent policies bring this context

closer to the Mozambican reality, revealing convergences in the difficulty of transforming normative values into consistent pedagogical practices (Silva & Fernandes, 2018).

Ethics is formally recognized, but the lack of structural mechanisms and teacher training compromises its effectiveness. From a theoretical point of view, Lima (2025) deepens the discussion by emphasizing that ethics should be conceived as a shared responsibility, requiring institutional coherence and democratic management. Santos (2025) adds that the school of the future needs to incorporate innovative and inclusive practices, capable of responding to the demands of globalized modernity without losing sight of community values. This tension between universality and locality is also highlighted by Pacho & Zimbico (2022), who underline the role of the teacher as an ethical mediator and agent of social transformation.

4.3 ETHICS EDUCATION IN MOZAMBICAN SCHOOLS

Documents such as Law No. 18/2018 (Mozambique, 2018) and the Basic Education Curriculum Programs (MINEDH, 2020), recognize ethics as a fundamental axis of the integral formation of students, situating it as part of the educational mission aimed at citizenship and democratic coexistence.

However, these documents present only generic references to values such as respect, solidarity, responsibility and democratic coexistence, without offering specific methodological guidelines for the implementation of ethics in everyday school life. This gap evidences what Severino (2013) calls "normative fragility", in which principles are affirmed at the discursive level, but are not translated into systematized pedagogical practices.

The curricular plans (Mozambique, 2020) reinforce the presence of ethics as a transversal component, but lack concrete didactic strategies, which can be related to the needs of transforming abstract categories into observable pedagogical practices.

The literature also points to evidence of poor teacher preparation and the absence of regular continuing education programs, confirming Creswell's (2010) analysis, according to which the quality of implementation depends on the training of educational agents. In this sense, Bueno (2018) argues that ethical training requires reflective and dialogical processes, which are not sufficiently contemplated in official documents.

The school practices described in recent studies (Siena et al., 2024) reveal a predominance of transmissive approaches, focused on the exposition of values in a normative way, poorly articulated with the daily lives of students. This finding dialogues with Silva (2015), who defends the need for contextualized pedagogical practices, capable of relating ethical principles to the concrete experiences of students. The absence of

participatory methodologies and curricular integration strategies reinforces the distance between official discourse and school practice, limiting the effectiveness of ethics education as an instrument of integral formation.

4.4 ETHICS IN EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

Instruments such as Law No. 18/2018 (Mozambique, 2018), the Strategic Plan for Education 2020–2029 (Mozambique, 2020) and the curricular documents for basic education (Mozambique, 2022) affirm ethics as a transversal component and guiding principle of citizenship. These normative frameworks recognize the importance of ethical training as part of integral education, but the analysis highlighted gaps in the operational mechanisms that should ensure effective transversality. This finding dialogues with Severino (2013), who warns of the distance between normative discourses and their materialization in consistent pedagogical practices.

We also found the persistence of weaknesses in the definition of institutional responsibilities, in the articulation between school and community and in the availability of adequate pedagogical resources. This lack of clarity and structural support confirms Silva's (2015) critique, according to which educational policies tend to enunciate universal values without offering concrete means for their implementation. In addition, the implementation of ethical guidelines depends on organizational conditions that many schools do not yet have, such as infrastructure, teacher training and community support, which limits the effective implementation of the established guidelines.

Siena et al. (2024) argue that educational processes only become socially significant when articulated with everyday practices and the real conditions of school institutions. In this sense, Bardin (2016) highlights that abstract categories, such as ethical values, need to be operationalized in observable and evaluable pedagogical practices. The absence of participatory methodologies and continuous training strategies for teachers, identified both in official documents and in empirical studies, confirms the analysis of Creswell (2010) and Bueno (2018), who defend the need for teacher training and reflective approaches so that ethics becomes an effective part of the school experience.

Thus, although official documents recognize ethics as a fundamental axis of citizenship education, the lack of operational mechanisms, institutional clarity and structural conditions reveals a distance between normative discourse and pedagogical practice. This tension between ideal and reality reinforces the need for more consistent educational policies, capable of articulating ethical values with concrete strategies for teaching and teacher training.

4.5 STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED FOR THE PROMOTION OF ETHICS EDUCATION

The strategies for promoting ethics education identified in official documents appear in a punctual and poorly systematized way. Among them, the valorization of participatory activities, the encouragement of community projects, the incorporation of traditional narratives and local cultural practices, as well as the use of methodologies that favor dialogue, conflict resolution and cooperation stand out.

Authors such as Vieira & Menezes, 2016; Mussaque, 2018; Tovela, 2021; Bozzo, 2023A reinforce the relevance of these practices, especially when articulated with the active participation of students and the educational community (Vieira & Menezes, 2016; Mussaque, 2018; Tovela, 2021; Bozzo, 2023).

However, we observe that such initiatives are not organized in consistent guidelines in the normative documents, which compromises their effective implementation and confirms the criticism of Papel (2020) and the findings of the Curriculum Implementation Monitoring Report (Mozambique, 2022).

However, the official recognition of ethics as a fundamental axis of the integral education of students is present in the main normative documents, such as Law No. 18/2018 and the Education Policy and Strategy 2020–2029 (Mozambique, 2020). This normative consensus, however, does not translate into consistent pedagogical practices, revealing a gap between discourse and operationalization. Mussaque (2018) had already pointed out this incoherence, highlighting that the absence of clear mechanisms compromises the effective experience of ethical values in everyday school life.

In the curricular sphere, values appear in a generic way, with references to respect, solidarity, responsibility and democratic coexistence. However, such values are presented in an abstract way, without definition of observable competencies, which makes their practical application difficult (Barros & Choti, 2020; Papel, 2020). This finding reinforces the need for methodologies that articulate universal values with local knowledge, as defended by Tovela (2021) and Cardoso, Silva & Jesus (2020), when emphasizing the importance of community and intercultural practices.

As for the methodological guidelines, no specific guidelines were identified for the implementation of ethics, which weakens the teaching action. The Curriculum Implementation Monitoring Report (Mozambique, 2022) confirms this absence, pointing to insufficient pedagogical resources and a lack of consistent methodologies. Vieira & Menezes (2016) suggest that participatory methodologies, such as debates and dramatizations, could fill this gap, favoring student protagonism and the practical experience of values.

Teacher training is another critical point. There is evidence of poor initial preparation and the absence of regular in-service training strategies, which limits teachers' ability to develop consistent and contextualised practices (UNESCO, 2016; Pacho & Zimbico, 2022). This formative insufficiency contributes to the reproduction of transmissive and normative approaches, rather than reflective and participatory practices.

Finally, the school practices described in the literature reveal a predominance of transmissive approaches, which are poorly articulated with the students' daily lives. Ethics, in this context, is worked on in a decontextualized way, with no connection to real student experiences (Papal, 2020; Bozzo, 2023). This finding reinforces the criticism of Vieira & Menezes (2016), who defend participatory and contextualized methodologies as a way to overcome curricular fragmentation and promote an ethics lived in the school space.

The analysis shows that, although there is normative consensus on the centrality of ethics in integral education, significant gaps persist in its operationalization. The absence of clear methodological guidelines, the insufficiency of teacher training and the predominance of transmissive practices compromise the consolidation of a transformative ethical education in Mozambique.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main objective of this study was to analyze the convergences and distances between the normative guidelines of ethics education and their effective pedagogical implementation in basic education in Mozambique. Based on the documentary and bibliographic methodological approach, it demonstrated that, although ethics is recognized as the structuring axis of integral education in legal and curricular devices (Mozambique, 2018, 2020), its effectiveness remains weakened by methodological gaps, insufficient teacher preparation, and institutional incoherence between proclaimed values and daily practices.

From a theoretical point of view, the specialized literature reinforces that ethics should be understood as a reflective, contextual, and transformative practice, articulated with citizenship and community traditions (Mussaquer, 2018; Vieira & Menezes, 2016; Tabela, 2021; Bozzo, 2023). However, the data analysed reveal that, in the Mozambican school reality, transmissive and normative approaches prevail, poorly articulated with the daily lives of students, confirming the criticism of Papal (2020) and the findings of the Curriculum Implementation Monitoring Report (Mozambique, 2022).

The comparison with experiences in the PALOP showed that challenges are common, but also that there are differentiated and promising paths. In Angola, curricular centralization and scarcity of resources limit the operationalization of ethics (Cardoso, Silva & Jesus, 2020);

in Cape Verde, valuing local knowledge and community practices offers viable alternatives (Silva & Fernandes, 2018); in São Tomé and Príncipe, institutional fragility brings the context closer to Mozambican difficulties. This diversity reveals that, although there is normative consensus, practical implementation depends on specific structural and cultural conditions.

The critical analysis of the tensions between policies and practices reinforces the need for an intercultural, interdisciplinary and situated approach to school ethics. From a practical point of view, the study points out fundamental strategies: the transversal integration of ethics in the curricula, the continuous training of teachers as ethical and cultural mediators, the valorization of community traditions and the adoption of participatory methodologies that promote student protagonism and critical dialogue. These proposals respond directly to the dimensions analyzed, official recognition, curricula, methodologies, teacher training and school practices, converging to the construction of a democratic and solidary citizenship, capable of articulating universal values with local contexts.

This study offers subsidies for educational policies and practices that promote a lived and transformative ethic, strengthening the school as a space for critical reflection, inclusion and community participation. By proposing the articulation between theory and practice, and by integrating comparisons between Mozambique and the other PALOP countries, it contributes to broadening the academic debate and guiding concrete actions that respond to the contemporary challenges of ethics education in the Portuguese-speaking African region.

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